

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISRUPTIVE
INFLUENCES OF BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS
EXHIBITED BY STUDENTS IN THE
CLASSROOM**

ANNE LATHAM LUCAS

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCES OF BEHAVIOR
PROBLEMS EXHIBITED BY STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

An Abstract
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in Psychology

by
Anne Latham Lucas
March, 1983

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to determine the attitudes toward problem behaviors of classroom teachers at the present time when compared to those of teachers in previous investigations. Additionally, an attempt was made to identify the causes of problem behaviors as perceived by the teachers in the sample.

Ninety-four junior and senior high school teachers from the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System, Clarksville, Tennessee, were asked to rank 120 behaviors as to their seriousness in the classroom. These behaviors were ranked using a Q-Sort method utilizing nine specific stanines with stanine one being "of little significance" and stanine nine being "of great significance."

Sums of stanines were calculated in order to rank the behaviors seen as problems and calculated on the nine areas ranked as causes of problem behaviors by the teachers. Percentages of occurrence were computed for the behaviors and the areas. Results were examined for significance with the use of the Mann-Whitney U Test.

The results indicated that there was a significant difference in the behaviors seen as problems in the schools of today and those seen as problems in the previous studies. Sexual concerns and overt types of behaviors were seen as the most troublesome in previous research; however, teachers

in classrooms of the present time view learning problems, underachieving, listening problems, anxiety and other academic or psychologically based problems as more serious. The lack of parental interest in education was perceived by the teachers to be the most important area contributing to the cause of the behaviors.

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Anne Latham Lucas entitled "Teachers' Perceptions of Disruptive Influences of Behavior Problems Exhibited by Students in the Classroom." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Psychology.

Linda Rudolph
Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:

John L. Martin
Second Committee Member

Barland E. Blair
Third Committee Member

Accepted for the
Graduate Council:

William H. Ellis
Dean of the Graduate School

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

According to Gallup (1979), the American public identifies discipline as the most important problem facing today's schools. In order to arrive at this conclusion, Gallup conducted personal interviews with 1514 adults (18 years of age and older) in all parts of the country and in all types of communities. Items covered in the survey were developed to cover current issues of prime concern to both educators and the general population. The results indicated the following percentages of adults felt that lack of discipline was the most significant problem in the schools: 24% of the national sample, 24% of those adults having no children in the schools; 26% of the public school parents; and, 32% of the parochial school parents.

If discipline is a significant problem in the school system, then it would seem necessary to determine the problem behaviors that occur in the classroom, especially those behaviors that classroom teachers identify as most significant in causing problems in the school. For many years the subject of behavior problems within the classroom has been of major concern. Researchers have attempted to distinguish those behaviors that teachers specifically point out as being responsible for disruption and poor performance on the part of the student in class.

Review of the Literature

Wickman stimulated the initial interest in research dealing with teachers' attitudes toward problem behaviors in his now classic study conducted in 1926. He devised a list of behavior problems by asking classroom teachers in the Minneapolis school system to (1) individually report by means of a questionnaire all kinds of behavior problems which they had encountered in their teaching career; (2) to rate all of their pupils on a behavior record containing a list of the behavior problems which they reported on the questionnaire; and (3) to rate their pupils on a behavior and personality rating scale which was devised by Wickman and constructed with reference to graded lists of behavior problems and personality characteristics considered important by mental hygienists in estimating the emotional and social adjustments of children. From this list of problem behaviors prepared by the teachers and by looking at the manner in which they rated their pupils on the scale, it became clear that teachers reacted strongly to behavior problems of a certain type but were relatively unconscious of, or less concerned with, problems relating to other types of behaviors. These suggestive results led Wickman to conclude that there was a need for research on the specific nature of teachers' reactions to the behavior problems of children.

Following the Minneapolis pilot study, Wickman went to Cleveland, Ohio, to repeat the experiment in the school system. By using the Minneapolis study as a control measure,

data were secured which supported the first investigation and led to a direct experimental study of teachers' attitudes. Using the data from these two pilot studies, Wickman compiled a list of 50 behavior problems and asked 511 classroom teachers to rate the list of 50 problem behaviors as to their degree of seriousness. The sample of teachers consisted of the entire teaching staffs of thirteen representative schools in six communities, two groups of teachers enrolled in advanced courses in two colleges of education, and the staff of one progressive private school for boys. Locations of the schools included Cleveland, Ohio; Newark, New Jersey; New York City; three villages; and Columbia, Ohio.

Grades taught ranged from kindergarten through twelve and included classes for superior children and classes for below average children. The ratings were scored by means of a calibrated rule containing 20 equal divisions: 0 indicating that the behavior was of no consequence; 4.5 indicating the behavior was of slight consequence; 12.25 indicating the behavior was of considerable consequence; and 20 indicating the behavior was an extremely grave problem. Consequence as used by Wickman is synonymous with seriousness or undesirable. Wickman gave each of the teachers the list of 50 problem behaviors and asked them to rate each behavior with respect to this question: "How serious (or undesirable) is this behavior in any child?" The results of the investigation were then reported in averages based on the calibrated rule values.

Wickman concluded from the results that out of the 50 behaviors, the more extravertive reactions such as heterosexual activity, stealing, masturbation, obscene notes, lying, truancy, defiance, cheating, destroying school property, and disobedience were rated by their teachers as the most serious (or undesirable) behaviors elicited by the school children. Those behaviors rated as least serious (or undesirable) were suspiciousness, imaginative lying, fearfulness, unsociability, withdrawing, sensitiveness, inquisitiveness, and shyness.

Yourman (1932) conducted a similar study of maladjustment in the elementary schools of New York City. Some of the findings as they relate to the identification of children as "problems" are presented here. Yourman selected teachers of alternate grades from twelve representative school systems within New York City. The teachers were asked to designate the two children in their classes they considered to be outstanding behavior (not academic) problems. The teachers were then asked to compile a list of behaviors which they considered characteristics of these children. Findings revealed that the behavior problems evidenced in the classroom were aggressive, disturbing types of behaviors. This step led Yourman to submit Wickman's list of problem behaviors to the teachers. He asked the teachers to rate the behavior problems according to how serious they considered the various forms of behavior to be based on a comparison with their own students. The data were analyzed using Wickman's calibrated

scale and were reported in averages. The results confirmed Wickman's findings that teachers consider aggressive behavior and violations of moral standards to be very serious problems. Furthermore, as a group, teachers in New York City reported that they did not recognize children with withdrawing, evasive personality traits as being problems.

Bain (1927, 1932) began the first longitudinal study concerning the attitudes of teachers toward behavior problems. Bain's main purpose was to find just how similar the attitudes of the teachers toward the same behavior problems were after a period of five years. Six groups of teachers were selected from the Teachers College located at Columbia University. The majority of the subjects were experienced teachers enrolled in classes at the University and the remaining participants were on the staff at the University. Again, the teachers were asked to rate problem behaviors according to this question: "How serious (or undesirable) is this behavior in any child?" The Wickman list of 50 problem behaviors was used as a basis for the ratings. The ratings recorded were scored by use of the calibrated rule employed in the Wickman study. Means and probable errors were computed for each item on the scale in accordance with the ratings derived from the two studies. Results indicated that the most serious problems in children, according to the opinion of the teachers making the ratings in 1927, fell into the areas of sexual immaturity and

dishonesty which included untruthfulness, cheating, stealing, masturbation, heterosexual activities, and obscene notes. The problems relating to difficulties which disturb a teacher when conducting classroom activities were rated as least serious. These problems included whispering, interrupting, inquisitiveness, restlessness, silliness, thoughtlessness, and inattention. The teachers in the 1932 study almost without exception described the recessive, withdrawing types of behaviors such as discouragement, fearfulness, sensitiveness, unsociability, to be of greater significance and concern. Those items which were assigned places of less seriousness in the second study were all active offenses. They included sexual problems such as masturbation, obscene notes and pictures. Other problems of less seriousness were truancy, smoking, disobedience, profanity, and lying. In Bain's conclusions, he pointed out that the study showed a struggle toward new viewpoints in education; a shift in which there are still conflicting attitudes and no settled convictions.

Ellis and Miller (1935) conducted a study based on Wickman's work. Their research was undertaken for the purpose of comparing the results secured by Wickman in 1926 with those obtained under certain changed conditions. They selected 382 junior and senior high school teachers in Denver, Colorado. A rating scale listing 50 types of problem behaviors in children was used. These problems were to be rated as to their seriousness. Each problem was rated on a scale varying from "of no

consequence" to "an extremely grave problem." The rating scale was introduced to the teachers with the statement that it represented an effort to secure necessary information in evaluating the seriousness of behavior problems in children. The terminology employed in the setting up of the scale included such words as "serious," "undesirable," "misfit," "disturbing," "problem child" and "maladjustment." Stress was placed on the degree of undesirableness of a particular behavior problem in a child and the amount of difficulty produced in the coping with the problem. By directing them in this manner, Ellis and Miller hoped that the emotional reactions to the problems by the teachers would be elicited. One additional technique was used to eliminate or reduce a teacher's tendency to intellectualize or rationalize a rating--a time limit of thirty minutes was imposed on each rating. The list of 50 behavior problems from the Wickman study was used. Participation of the teachers was entirely voluntary. No ratings completed by teachers who had read Wickman's study or had even heard of it were included in the report. Results of the study indicated that the Denver teachers' ratings correlated .65 with those of the Wickman teachers. Those behaviors listed as most serious by the teachers were dishonesty, immorality, cruelty, and temper tantrums. Those behaviors listed as least serious were truancy, violations of school work requirements, and disorderliness in class. The basic difference noted in the study, according to the ratings of the Denver teachers and

those in the Wickman study, was in their increased realization of the seriousness of withdrawing, recessive personality traits.

Mitchell (1940), in accordance with other studies, reconstructed the Wickman list and conducted a similar investigation in the schools in the Cleveland, Ohio, Lakewood, Ohio, and Minneapolis, Minnesota areas. The main thrust of the investigation was to determine if teachers had changed their estimate of the importance of certain behaviors of children since the Wickman study in 1926. Fifty-five traits were listed in alphabetical order on a scale ranging from "desirable" to "extremely serious" with numerical values of 3 to 12, respectively. Twenty-two traits were listed exactly as in Wickman's study; twenty-seven with similar but different wordings were included. In order to get ratings of a more definite nature, they were made with reference to children in grades five and six and to children ten to thirteen years of age. A group of 395 teachers were asked to complete the rating scales. They were instructed to rate each behavior trait independently of other traits and to think of each trait in reference to a certain child or children that they had observed in their teaching experience. The results of the ranks were reported as medians and means of the teachers' ratings. According to the rank-differences method, the correlation coefficient between the medians of the ratings in 1940 and the means of the teachers' ratings

in 1926 was +.78. The coefficient was the same when the means of the two studies were computed. Closer examination of the results indicated that the changes in rankings suggested that the teachers' were moving toward considering non-aggressive traits, such as unsocialness, fearfulness, sullenness, unhappiness, cowardliness, easily discouraged, suspiciousness, and nervousness, as more serious in 1940 than they were in 1927. Mitchell also noted that many behaviors seen as most serious by his teachers were in close agreement with the Wickman teachers. The behaviors listed in this group were cheating, cruelty (pinching and hitting, etc.), destructiveness, fearfulness, heterosexual activity (immorality), lack of interest in work, poor concentration, obscenity, restlessness, and stealing.

Stouffer (1950) examined the ratings of 481 teachers on the same list of problem behaviors that were presented to the teachers by Wickman in 1926. Directions for the ratings of the behaviors were basically identical to Wickman's directions except that the teachers were asked to rank each behavior not as to its effect at the present time, but as to how they thought it would affect the child's future development. In the evaluation of the results, Stouffer found that problems relating to honesty, sex, truancy, and classroom order were ranked very similarly to those of the Wickman study. He further compared the ratings and found that unhappiness, depression, unsociability, and withdrawal had moved closer

to the top of the list in seriousness according to the ratings completed by his teachers. Those behaviors such as masturbation, smoking, and profanity which were ranked high on the list in 1926 had dropped in significance by 1950.

Hunter (1955) conducted research very similar to that completed by Mitchell in 1940. The purpose of Hunter's study was to compare ratings obtained on problem behaviors in 1955 to the ratings of the same problem behaviors found by Wickman in 1926. He administered the Wickman (1926) list of problem behaviors to a group of 308 elementary and secondary school teachers in New Orleans, Louisiana. Non-teaching and administrative personnel were not included. The teachers were asked to rate the degree of seriousness of each behavior problem on a scale from 0 to 20 ("no consequence" to "an extremely grave problem") with regard to the child's future adjustment and welfare. The data were reported by utilizing rank-order comparisons and mean comparisons with the ratings obtained by Wickman. Results of the study showed that of the ten problems rated as most serious by the 1955 teachers, eight were ranked as being equally serious by the teachers in 1926. The typical behavior problem child in 1955, as in 1926, was characterized by annoying, aggressive, and irresponsible types of behavior.

In a study designed to define the behavior problems of middle childhood, Peterson (1961) concluded that two factors emerged as being characteristic of this age period:

(1) tendencies to express impulses against society (conduct problems); and (2) a variety of elements suggesting low self-esteem, social withdrawal, and dysphoric mood (personality problems). In order to obtain a sample of problems, Peterson used the referral problems of 427 cases at a guidance clinic and tabulated frequencies for all problems mentioned more than once. Groups of synonymous and redundant terms were eliminated. Of the problems remaining 58 were selected for inclusion in the study because of their frequency of occurrence. These were ordered randomly and assembled in a format requiring ratings of 0 (no problem), 1 (mild problem), or 2 (severe problem). The list of behaviors was submitted to 28 teachers of kindergarten and elementary school children in six different schools in Illinois. The teachers were asked to rank the problems as to their seriousness using their own students as a basis for comparison. Phi coefficients of intercorrelation were computed for the samples. The results indicated that the conduct problems listed as serious were disobedience, disruptiveness, destructiveness, irresponsibility, shortness of attention span, inattentiveness, hyperactivity, temper tantrums, and fighting. The personality problems listed as serious were feelings of inferiority, lack of self-confidence, social withdrawal, shyness, anxiety, daydreaming and depression.

A different method of studying behavior problems was employed by Mangan and Shafer in 1962. These researchers took the behavior problems listed in the Wickman (1926)

study and from other researchers and secured children's opinions concerning the seriousness of certain behaviors. A list of 47 types of behaviors were submitted to 101 children enrolled in grades five through eight. The children were representative of public, parochial, and private school systems. The students were asked for their views on the seriousness of the different types of behaviors by having them rank the behaviors from very serious to trivial. The results were correlated with the teachers' lists from the Wickman (1926) study. The following problem behaviors were seen as being most serious of the 47 behaviors given to the students: stealing, skipping school, cheating, destroying school material, temper tantrums, and lying. From these results Mangan and Shafer concluded that children tend to retain those similar attitudes to their teacher through college.

Rice (1963) investigated types of behaviors that were most frequently referred to a central guidance agency at various grade levels. He obtained ratings from 200 classroom teachers on these different behavior problems. The teachers were to specify which behaviors they felt were the most important in deciding whether or not a child would be referred to the guidance agency. The teachers were asked to designate one primary reason why the child was referred for evaluation; however, the teachers could mention as many secondary reasons for the child's referral as necessary to explain the problems in a particular case. The teachers came from different parts

of the country and from widely varied educational backgrounds. The data fell into six main problem categories:

1. Emotional Reactions: anxiety, hyperactivity, immaturity, impulsivity, moodiness, and withdrawal;
2. Intellectual Disabilities: Short attention span, low ability, memory defective, poor study habits, and under-achieving;
3. Motivational Inadequacy: lack of ambition, frustration, lack of interest, and negative attitude;
4. Moral Defect: lying, obscenity, stealing, psycho-sexual indiscretion, and values undeveloped;
5. Physical Ailments: poor health habits, chronic illness, orthopedic handicap, neurological handicap, psychosomatic manifestations; and
6. Social Maladjustment: antisocial behavior, lack of discipline, aggressive behavior, family conflict, isolation, and uncouth behavior.

These six were found to be adequate for almost all student problems at all grade levels. Specific problem categories described as secondary reasons for referral were very similar to the primary causes listed above.

In his analysis, Rice (1963) concluded that primary school children were shown to be referred to the agency mainly for intellectual problems, particularly those involving low ability. Intermediate pupils were also largely referred

for intellectual problems, but these included more perceptual difficulties complicated by underachieving. This age group also showed an increase in social problems. The configuration of problem categories radically changed at the junior high level. The results showed that the children in this age group exhibited a huge proportion of social problems, especially those dealing with family conflicts and moral conflicts involving lying, obscenity, and stealing. At the high school level some re-emergence of intellectual problems was noticed, but the proportion of motivational problems reached a peak. Social and moral problems tended to taper off by the time the students reached high school level. Rice (1963) concluded that: (1) pupil's problems could be classified into six main categories at any grade level; (2) the number of children with intellectual, moral, and social problems varied considerably at different grade levels; (3) intellectual disabilities and social maladjustments seemed to be the most common problems at any grade level; (4) problems of moral defect and physical ailments tended to be less common at all grade levels; and (5) problems arising from emotional reactions tended to be constant at all grade levels.

Bellon, Doak, and Handler (1978) made the decision to conduct a state-wide study in Tennessee to explore the discipline concerns in the school systems. A questionnaire was developed, pilot tested, and then administered to approximately 4000 Tennessee teachers, administrators, and other educational

personnel. A sampling plan was devised to ensure that schools from all sections of the state and all socio-economic levels were represented. A total of 3,783 questionnaires were returned, representing a 74.3% response. The data were first analyzed in terms of the total sample. Secondly, a detailed analysis was made according to the nine school classifications. Thirdly, an examination of the data with respect to school organization and demographic characteristics was made. Finally, the comments and responses were summarized and examined to determine response patterns. The results indicated that those discipline problems which were perceived to be the most significant across the state fell into four main areas. Those areas most consistently reported were: inattention to lessons, talking out of turn, overactive behavior in the classroom, and ongoing apathetic behavior. Those behaviors receiving very few responses included concerns about alcohol and drug-related discipline problems. Further investigation of the data indicated that the key conditions or influences related to the discipline problems were consistent across the state. Teachers specified out-of-school factors, especially improper training at home, effects of television, and parental non-involvement, as contributing to approximately 50% of the conditions influencing behavior or discipline problems within the school system. Classroom conditions, particularly overcrowding, ranked next in overall emphasis. The teachers did not perceive a relationship between curriculum and instruction

and the discipline problems occurring in the schools. Overall responses indicated that discipline problems in the Tennessee school system have shown a definite increase over the past 10 years.

The 1979 Teacher Opinion Poll conducted by the National Educational Association sought to investigate what teachers think about issues of current concern to both educators and the public. In the area of student discipline and violence, 74% of the respondents said discipline problems impair their effectiveness as teachers; 17% said that discipline problems greatly impair their teaching effectiveness. Five percent had been physically attacked by a student during the 1978-79 school year. Twenty-eight percent had personal property stolen, and nearly twenty-three percent had personal property damaged. When teachers were asked to place priorities on the areas that they felt the federal government should allow money for research, the area receiving top priority was discipline in the schools.

A review of the literature between 1980 and 1982 revealed that studies concerning problem behaviors were aimed at specific populations such as learning disabled, physically handicapped, mentally handicapped or the pre-school child. None of the results of these studies could be applied to the present study due to the specificity of the populations.

Purpose of the Study

A review of the literature reveals a consistent pattern

of results concerning the seriousness of children's behavior problems as seen by classroom teachers from 1926 to 1979, a period of over 50 years. Results from these studies indicated that the more aggressive behaviors were viewed as most serious in the earlier studies. By 1940 the attitudes of the teachers began to change, with non-aggressive behavior as being viewed as equally serious in the classroom. This shift in the teachers' attitudes was noted throughout the remainder of the studies. In summary, it appears that the teachers' attitudes have changed from identifying behaviors of an aggressive/annoying type to those of an academic/psychological type as being the most serious behavior problems in the classroom.

The purpose of the present study was to:

- (1) Determine the behaviors that teachers perceive as causing the most problems in today's classrooms;
- (2) Compare the teachers' perceptions of the behavior problems in 1926 and 1955 to the present time; and
- (3) Determine the teachers perceptions of the sources of these problems.

Sample

The sample for the present study consisted of 94 junior and senior high school teachers employed by the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System, Clarksville, Tennessee. The teachers were located in the five junior and senior high schools within the Clarksville city limits. The sample included 58 female and 36 male teachers. The years of teaching experience of the teachers ranged from 1 to 28 years. The most recent degree earned by one of the teachers was in 1979 and the earliest degree held was awarded in 1935. All of the teachers held a Bachelors degree; 89 percent held a Masters degree; and 21 percent had completed post masters work.

Materials

A box was constructed for use in completing the Q-Sort rankings. The box measured 36" long, 4" wide and 6" high. Nine vertical slots were constructed on the front side of the box. Each slot was labeled according to the appropriate stanine position and the specific number of cards that could be placed in each stanine slot.

The list of behaviors chosen for the study was compiled from several different sources. Wickman's list of 50 problem behaviors from his 1926 study was used, and the remaining behaviors were secured from textbooks of psychology, guidance, counseling or any other source that contained material

relevant to behavior problems of children or students (see Table 1).

An additional nine cards were presented to the subjects to be ranked according to the same stanine positions. On these cards were suggested environmental factors which the teachers were asked to rank as possible contributing factors for the problem behaviors (see Table 2).

Procedure

Each subject was seated in front of a Q-Sort box. The experimenter handed the subject a stack of 120 cards and proceeded to read to the subject the instructions for completing the Q-Sort (see Appendix A).

Upon completing this ranking the cards were removed and the behaviors were recorded according to the proper stanine. The teachers were then asked to complete a ranking of nine specific areas that might possibly be considered as factors causing the various behaviors using the same procedure. These ranks were recorded by the experimenter in the same manner.

Each teacher was given the same set of instructions and was allowed as much time as was necessary for the completion of the task. The experimenter collected data from each teacher concerning their training and teaching experience at the conclusion of the task (see Appendix B).

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the rank order ratings by the teachers in the present study for behaviors seen as most serious to least serious. Of the 120 behaviors the ten seen as most serious in today's classrooms were reading problems, poor study habits, listening problems, irresponsibility, absenteeism, talking out, poor self-concept, underachieving, attention span and anxiety. Of these ten only two items appeared on the Wickman or Hunter list: irresponsibility and attention span. Thus, the teachers in the present study viewed serious problem behaviors as falling into more academically or psychologically based categories rather than the annoying, aggressive or irresponsible types of behavior identified by the 1926 and 1955 teachers. The largest ranking differences occurred in the area of sexual behaviors. Masturbation and heterosexual activity were ranked 120th and 47th in the present study; Hunter's subjects ranked these behaviors as 28th and 10th, respectively; Wickman's teachers ranked them 3rd and 1st, respectively. Present day teachers apparently consider sexual behaviors less serious than teachers in the earlier studies.

Further examination of Table 1 reveals that those behaviors which fell into the central positions of the scale (ranks 51 through 69 inclusive) tended to be overt types of behaviors, aggressive in nature. These types of behaviors were characteristic of the problem child in the 1926 and 1955 studies.

Table 2 shows the rank-order ratings by teachers in the present study of the areas they consider to be the major cause and the least cause contributing to problem behaviors. Out of the nine potential problem areas, lack of parental interest in education was felt to be the most important factor contributing to behavior problems in the schools of today. Over 50% of the teachers held this opinion. Another large group indicated they felt the change in the nuclear family was an important factor. At the other end of the scale, over 50% of the teachers felt that teacher preparation was of little consequence in contributing to the behavior problems. The remaining areas were ranked, on the average, of equal importance to the cause of problem behavior.

In order to arrive at the ranks of the behaviors, sums of the stanines were calculated for each behavior and the behaviors were ranked according to their particular sum. To arrive at the magnitude of seriousness of each behavior the experimenter divided the stanines into three groups: stanines 1 through 3 (of little significance); stanines 4 through 6 (of average significance); and stanines 7 through 9 (of great significance). Percentages of occurrence for each of the three groups were calculated from total responses which showed the direction of magnitude. The Mann-Whitney U test of significance was used to analyze the data. Results of this test revealed that there was a significant difference in the teachers attitudes toward problem behaviors in today's classroom when compared to those attitudes in previous studies ($Z = 17.437$; $p < .01$).

Table 1
Comparison of Teachers' Ratings

Problem Behaviors	Rank Order	Percentages of Occurrence In Stanines		
		Little Significance	Average Significance	Great Significance
Reading problems	1	6.38	22.34	71.27
Study habits and skills (poor)	2	6.38	27.65	65.95
Listening problems	3	5.36	34.04	60.63
Irresponsibility	4	6.38	40.42	53.19
Absenteeism	5	9.57	37.23	56.38
Talking out	6	5.31	43.61	51.06
Self-concept (poor)	7	2.12	50.0	47.87
Underachievers	8	5.31	48.93	45.74
Attention span	9	10.63	46.80	41.48
Anxiety	10	2.12	56.38	42.55
Attention seeking	11	4.25	57.44	38.29
Boredom	12	7.44	60.63	38.29
Talking, incessant	13	6.38	46.80	45.74
Noisiness	14	9.57	41.48	48.93
Procrastination	15	5.31	57.44	37.23
Argumentativeness	16	7.44	51.06	41.48
Drug use	17	15.95	38.29	45.74
Truancy	18	17.02	44.68	38.29
Carelessness	19	12.76	44.68	42.55
Immaturity	20	8.51	60.63	30.85

Problem Behaviors	Rank Order	Percentages of Occurrence In Stanines		
		Little Significance	Average Significance	Great Significance
Insubordination	21	11.70	56.38	32.97
Grades	22	12.76	54.25	32.97
Cheating	23	8.51	51.06	40.42
Lying	24	5.31	68.08	26.59
Hyperactivity	25	13.83	46.80	39.36
Absences during tests	26	9.57	55.31	35.10
Impoliteness	27	8.51	59.57	31.91
Forgetfulness	28	8.51	57.44	34.04
Test Phobia	29	11.70	55.31	32.97
Discouragement	30	4.25	68.08	27.65
Vandalism	31	13.82	50.0	36.17
Blurting out	32	7.44	62.76	29.78
Stealing	33	12.76	64.89	22.34
Arrogance	34	12.76	62.76	24.46
Homework	35	17.02	48.93	34.04
Bullying	36	23.40	64.89	11.70
Rejected children	37	18.08	44.68	37.23
Wastefulness	38	15.95	55.31	28.72
Subbornness	39	10.63	71.27	21.27
Tardiness	40	10.63	51.12	37.23
Anger	41	7.40	71.27	21.20
Clowning	42	8.51	76.59	14.89

Problem Behaviors	Rank Order	Percentages of Occurrence In Stanines		
		Little Significance	Average Significance	Great Significance
Withdrawn children	43	15.95	57.44	26.59
Swearing	44	14.89	65.95	19.14
Messiness	45	10.63	68.08	21.27
Dropouts (potential)	46	14.89	61.70	23.40
Abused children	47	25.53	42.55	31.90
Sexual concerns	48	19.14	57.44	23.40
Dangerous conduct	49	19.14	50.0	30.85
Alibiing	50	12.76	67.02	19.10
Fistfighting	51	20.21	59.57	20.21
Acting out	52	13.82	63.84	20.21
Impulsiveness	53	14.89	64.89	30.85
Compulsiveness	54	6.38	79.78	13.82
Dependency	55	17.02	59.57	23.40
Chronic complaining	56	14.89	63.82	21.27
Kicking and hitting	57	21.27	67.02	22.34
Speech problems	58	14.89	65.95	19.14
Domineering children	59	15.95	62.76	21.27
Cliques	60	18.08	64.89	17.02
Name Calling	61	13.82	69.14	17.02
Paranoia	62	22.34	54.25	23.40
Spoiling	63	11.70	72.34	15.95
Obscenities	64	24.46	55.31	20.21

Problem Behaviors	Rank Order	Percentages of Occurrence In Stanines		
		Little Significance	Average Significance	Great Significance
Health problems	65	13.82	65.95	20.21
Note passing	66	38.29	45.74	15.95
Indecisiveness	67	15.95	68.08	15.95
Drinking	68	26.59	51.06	27.65
Demonstrativeness	69	10.63	80.85	8.5
Abrasiveness	70	12.76	64.89	15.95
Temper tantrums	71	24.46	53.19	22.34
Fearfulness	72	22.34	61.70	15.95
School phobia	73	13.50	53.19	21.27
Loneliness	74	17.02	69.14	13.82
Jealousy	75	21.27	63.82	14.89
Dawdling	76	13.82	74.46	10.63
Hypochondria	77	14.88	78.72	6.38
Gangs	78	22.34	60.63	15.95
Exhibitionism	79	19.14	65.95	14.89
Playing dumb	80	23.40	58.51	17.02
Littering	81	22.34	63.82	13.82
Gossip	82	26.59	58.51	14.89
Smoking	83	28.72	57.44	13.82
Bluffing	84	23.40	64.89	11.70
Sibling rivalry	85	26.59	55.31	18.08
Teasing	86	15.95	58.51	14.89
Whining	87	24.46	58.51	17.02

Problem Behaviors	Rank Order	Percentages of Occurrence In Stanines		
		Little Significance	Average Significance	Great Significance
Baiting the teacher	88	21.27	71.27	7.44
Mimicry	89	22.34	68.08	9.57
Tattling	90	20.21	71.27	8.51
Holidayitis	91	28.72	63.82	7.44
Hazing	92	20.21	70.21	9.57
Bus conduct	93	29.78	60.63	11.70
Bathroomitis	94	30.85	62.76	6.38
Obesity	95	39.36	51.06	9.57
Crushes	96	36.17	56.38	7.44
Nontalkers	97	35.10	52.12	12.76
Stuttering	98	47.87	35.10	19.14
Poronography	99	43.61	39.36	17.02
Spitwads	100	43.61	45.74	10.63
Gum chewing	101	36.17	56.38	7.44
Dress problems	102	47.87	47.87	4.25
Eccentricity	103	30.85	63.82	2.12
Acne	104	40.42	48.93	10.63
Body odors	105	45.74	46.80	7.44
Doodling	106	36.17	54.25	5.31
Crying	107	55.31	31.19	12.76
Slam books	108	50.0	45.74	4.25
Prejudices	109	19.14	64.89	15.95
Spitting	110	55.31	38.29	6.38

Problem Behaviors	Rank Order	Percentages of Occurrence In Stanines		
		Little Significance	Average Significance	Great Significance
	111	18.08	64.89	17.02
Cliques	112	61.70	32.97	6.38
Homesickness	113	53.19	38.29	8.51
Gambling	114	54.25	43.61	2.12
Wolf whistles	115	54.25	41.48	5.31
Protest movements	116	56.38	41.48	1.06
Handedness	117	57.44	38.29	4.29
Card playing	118	65.95	24.46	9.57
Tics	119	70.21	22.34	7.44
Lice	120	72.34	17.02	10.63
Masturbation				

Table 2

Rank-order Ratings of Teachers for Specific Areas

Potential Problem Area	Rank Order	Percentages of Occurrence In Stanines		
		Little Significance	Average Significance	Great Significance*
Lack of parental interest in education	1	5.31	28.72	64.89
Cultural changes in the nuclear family	2	20.21	20.21	58.51
TV	3	32.97	29.78	36.17
School curriculum	4	32.97	52.12	13.82
Teaching methods	5	39.36	40.42	19.14
Personality of the teacher	6	45.74	32.97	19.14
Structure of the educational system	7	35.10	36.17	27.65
Lack of financial and moral support from the community	8	35.10	29.78	34.04
Teacher preparation	9	50.0	26.59	22.34

* Little Significance - Stanines 1-3
 Average Significance - Stanines 4-6
 Great Significance - Stanines 7-9

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to further investigate the attitudes toward specific behaviors of classroom teachers at the present time when compared to those of previous investigations. Analysis of the data by rank order indicated the teachers perceived the most serious classroom problems as related to areas concerning reading (which was ranked as being most serious), study habits, listening, poor self-concept, anxiety and underachieving. Out of the first 40 behaviors selected by the teachers as most serious, 37.5% of the behaviors appeared to develop from academic and/or psychological problems; 35% were annoying types of behaviors; 25% were aggressive behaviors; and 2.5% were destructive types of behaviors. According to these percentages, the results seem to indicate that today's teachers identify classroom problem behaviors as being academically and/or psychologically based rather than being aggressive/annoying types. Wickman (1926) and Hunter (1955) both found opposite results in their studies dealing with problem behaviors.

An area of significant change in attitude was sexual behavior. Sexual concerns, masturbation, obscene notes and talk, profanity, etc., were all ranked much lower in seriousness in the present study than in 1926 or 1955.

The differences in results between the two studies may

be attributable to the changing values and attitudes which have occurred in our society over the span of approximately fifty years. Additionally, within the past few years several pieces of legislation concerning educational programs for students have passed at the state and federal levels. The impact of PL 94-142, which emphasizes the identification of and remediation for children with exceptionalities or special learning problems, has made teachers more attuned and able to recognize students demonstrating academic and/or psychological problems. With the continuation of such programs, hopefully those problem behaviors in the classroom will be reduced even more.

Another area of interest in the study were factors perceived by teachers as contributing to the problem behaviors demonstrated by children in the classroom. Lack of parental interest in education was seen by the teachers as being the most important cause. Teachers' comments concerning conferences or school meetings involving parent participation indicated there was not much interest on the part of the parents. It was estimated that approximately one-fourth of the parents communicated with the teachers or the school on matters concerning their child's progress and/or academic needs.

Changes in the nuclear family was ranked second highest as a factor contributing to the problem behaviors. The mobility may leave a child with insecure feelings about self or other forms of psychological disturbances. Since it was

pointed out earlier that many of the problem behaviors were psychological in nature, this interpretation could be considered.

Of the nine potential contributing factors surveyed those falling into the top positions were centered around areas outside the school system. Those located in the lowest positions of significance were directly concerned with the school system. The remaining contributing factors fell in ranks from 22.3 to 36.2 percent.

Discussion of some of the teachers' attitudes toward the study itself indicated they felt the list of behaviors was not applicable or appropriate for the junior and senior high school students. They indicated they felt some behaviors (lice, handedness, homesickness, and tattling) were more characteristic of elementary school students. Some felt none of the 120 behaviors could be categorized from least serious to most serious because they are all serious if they are encountered in the classroom. Others held the opposite viewpoint. Some had difficulty in comparing behaviors they observed with a specific behavior on the list. Generally speaking, however, the teachers were all quite cooperative and interested in helping to distinguish those behaviors considered to be the most troublesome in the classroom. Of even more interest to the teachers was not what the problems were, but how to effectively deal with them when encountered.

The populations surveyed by Wickman and Hunter are

descriptive of teachers' attitudes from large metropolitan areas. The cities included in their studies were Minneapolis, Minnesota; Cleveland and Columbia, Ohio; Newark, New Jersey; New York City; and New Orleans, Louisiana. It should be noted that the present study was conducted in a suburban community adjoining a military base. The student behaviors observed by the sample of teachers included those exhibited by a percentage of military dependents. Therefore, it may not be appropriate to generalize the findings to the population at large.

A longitudinal study following the student from kindergarten through the twelfth grade may be of assistance in contributing to the understanding of children's specific growth and development and the effects of specific social factors on their behavior patterns.

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A

The following instructions were read to each subject before they completed the Q-Sort rating scale.

Dr. Linda Rudolph of APSU, Ms. Anne Lucas and Mr. Lang Coleman, both graduate students at APSU, are studying learning problems of children in school. We would like to know what teachers see as the most significant problems they must deal with.

This is a Q-Sort set up. You are asked to sort the cards which we gave you into different categories. Printed on the cards are descriptive terms for problems you might encounter in the classroom. You are asked to read each card and place it in the slot which corresponds to your feelings concerning the magnitude of the problem. Number one is the least troublesome behavior and number nine is the most troublesome. Further, you may only put a certain number of cards in each slot. That number is indicated on the board in front of you."

APPENDIX B

Appendix B

The following questions were asked each subject after completing the Q-Sort for purposes of obtaining personal data on each teacher.

1. What grade(s) do you teach?
2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?
3. When did you receive your Bachelors degree, Masters degree?
4. How much college work, if any, have you acquired since the completion of your last degree?